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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1210
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 5040
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 0460
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 0295
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 1029
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ PRIORITY 1208
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY 0561
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO PRIORITY 0983
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 0461
RUEHLA/AMCONSUL BARCELONA PRIORITY 2201
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA PRIORITY 0163

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 002792

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EUR FOR A/S FRIED AND PDAS SHAPIRO
EUR/WE FOR ALLEGRONE, CLEMENTS, AND CERVETTI
WHA FOR A/S SHANNON AND PDAS SHAPIRO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/30/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [CU](#) [SP](#)

SUBJECT: SPAIN/CUBA: MIXED SIGNALS FROM MFA

REF: A. MADRID 2765

- [1](#)B. MADRID 2596
- [1](#)C. MADRID 2495
- [1](#)D. PARIS 2109
- [1](#)E. ROME 2990

Classified By: DCM Hugo Llorens; reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

[1](#)1. (C) Deputy FM Bernardino Leon told the Ambassador on October 31 that he is working with FM Miguel Angel Moratinos to develop an EU statement on Cuba for the next GAERC meeting in Brussels. The Ambassador had contacted Leon to voice the USG's frustration with Spain's apparent decision to back away from a commitment to work with the USG to craft a US-EU or EU unilateral statement promoting a transition to democracy in Cuba (Refs A, B, and C). The Ambassador expressed the USG's deep concern that Spain had made an about face on a commitment made to the Secretary on an issue of fundamental importance to the USG. Leon said that statements by Director General for Foreign Policy Rafael Dezcallar and Secretary of State for Ibero America Trinidad Jimenez to the Ambassador, DCM, and Pol Couns that the time was "not right" for a declaration on Cuba were not definitive. Leon insisted that he and Moratinos had made a political decision to pursue the issuance of a statement on Cuba. He indicated that it might be helpful for the USG to sound out other EU countries to gauge their support for a Cuba declaration, but asked that the USG not raise the possibility of a Spanish statement since Leon did not want to be seen as working at cross purposes with Trinidad Jimenez. He said that he understood Jimenez's desire to risk eliminating her contacts with Cuban officials so soon after taking up her post, but repeated that she did not have the final say on this matter.

[1](#)2. (C) Leon told the Ambassador that he had taken up the suggestion to look carefully at the Oscar Arias statement on Cuba as a possible guide for an EU or Spanish statement. He said the USG might not be happy with criticism of U.S. sanctions that would likely be contained in any EU document. The Ambassador responded that the USG was more concerned that there would be EU silence on Cuba at this critical time. Leon reiterated his commitment to a statement, saying he had prepared a draft declaration that Moratinos had seen and approved. He cautioned, however, that he could not guarantee

that he and Moratinos would win approval to pursue a statement at the EU level.

//COMMENT//

13. (C) Clearly, the Spanish Government has not closed the loop on this issue and is engaged in a debate over how to balance their commitment to us with their reluctance to take on the Castro regime. We are uncertain at this point as to who has the final say within the Spanish Government on political decisions regarding Cuba, and it appears that there is uncertainty within the Spanish Government as well. A Spanish newspaper ran a story on October 31 detailing friction between Jimenez and Leon over which one of them had the lead on Bolivia and other issues in Latin America. We do not know who will win this debate and will continue to push this issue in Madrid. As noted in Ref A, we believe we should build pressure on Spain by continuing to encourage other countries to adopt a more forward leaning posture in support of a democratic transition in Cuba (Refs D and E).
AGUIRRE